



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### **Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

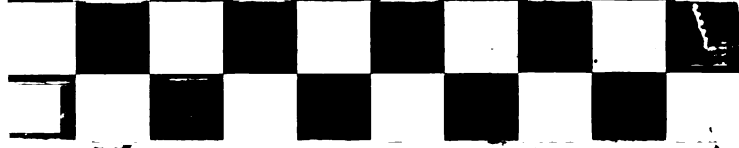
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### **About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



3 2044 1



71  
95



044 103 165 452

Urquhart, D.

---

Abyssinian War.

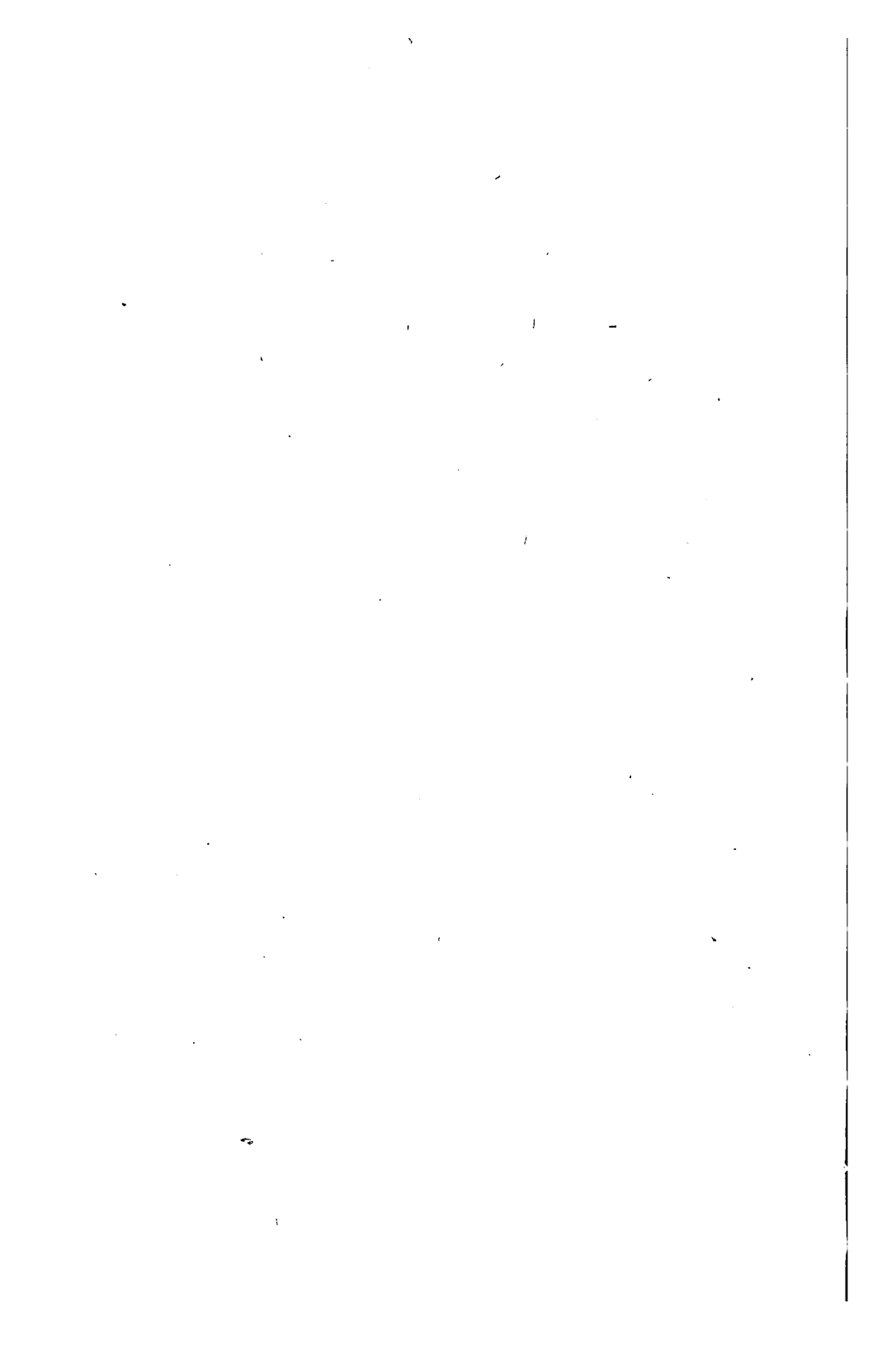
71

95

41  
95







71  
95

33

3545

# THE ABYSSINIAN WAR:

207

THE  
CONTINGENCY OF FAILURE.

216

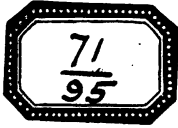
DECEMBER, 1867.

BY DAVID URQUHART.

71  
95

LONDON:  
DIPLOMATIC REVIEW OFFICE,  
24, EAST TEMPLE CHAMBERS.

1868.







## THE CONTINGENCY OF FAILURE.

---

HOLDING it to be both unworthy and unwise to allege duties or to appeal to laws, to those who acknowledge neither, yet hoping that some may be reached by what DEMOSTHENES calls the motive of the slave, I propose to consider one of the alternatives which must follow on every appeal to arms; one which, though it seems never to have presented itself to any of the inhabitants of the three kingdoms, will not be denied by any one of them to be possible: viz., *failure*.

This alternative, at a period little removed in date from the present, would have borne on a circumscribed field only; the number of men and cattle stated, the *matériel* valued, and the expenditure summed up, the account would have been closed. A loss of so much would have been sustained, and there the matter would have ended. It is not so at present. Within the last dozen years we have introduced fundamental changes in the Laws and in the use of our power in war. We have changed the tenure of our Indian Empire. Our internal condition has been changed from security to alarm; our great rival on the sea, and our neighbour in the Western hemisphere, has been prepared so as to be watchful for any occasion that may expose us to her blows; and a system has been admitted by which the greatest Empire may be disturbed or prostrated in her universal trade through the means of the most insignificant foe, even though destitute itself of a single port or a single league of coast. Every past condition of human existence and of the conduct of warlike operations having been altered, no maxim or rule of the past can hold, no analogy be drawn from former operations.

It is but natural to expect that, under such circumstances, the mind should recoil from the examination of the case that failure in Abyssinia presents, alike from the vastness of the field on which such a contingency would operate, the darkness enveloping the manner in which the effects would be produced, and the magnitude of the disasters with which they may be attended.

Thirty years ago it might have been difficult to make any

Englishman admit the possibility of failure. He would have appealed to the past, and remained satisfied that English enterprise, courage, and discipline would be equal to any emergency. Such difficulty should not stand in our way to-day. Our two last expeditions have been utterly destroyed. But one man, and he a civilian, escaped from the Affghan Army, composed of nearly double the Abyssinian one, yet it entered the country without difficulty, and triumphantly effected its purpose. So the Crimean Army first sent utterly perished, with the exception of those invalided home. In neither case was there anything to apprehend either from the country or the enemy. Both disasters came from causes in ourselves. An episode in the last of these wars peculiarly applies. A French expedition, almost equal in fighting-men to that now sent to Abyssinia, made an excursion through a district in Europe perfectly well known (the Dobroja), daily traversed by travellers, the field of warlike operations from time immemorial, healthy in itself, with wood, water, and pasturage; not more than one hundred and twenty miles in length or forty miles in breadth; with a navigable river on one side, and the sea on the other. It did not see a foe, and returned *in a fortnight reduced to one-half its numbers*.

Nor can Mexico be neglected. There we may see that European Cabinets at this time do not possess sense or foresight, that European discipline is of small value against the "uncivilised." That affair is also a warning of what the United States is conscious of being able to do, and the humiliation it can inflict on any Government that, like France, has surrendered its maritime power.

England now finds herself for the first time at war since the Declaration of Paris. I do not apply the word WAR to our operations against Abyssinia; I apply it to her operations against us.

It is true that this war is not on the sea at present. Our enemy has no seaboard; has, consequently, no cities or forts to bombard, no vessels to attack, and no commerce to appropriate. It may therefore be supposed that whatever the effect in itself of the surrender of the right to capture and confiscate our enemies' produce and property, that change can in no way affect the present conflict. On the contingency of failure we have to expect that other Powers will be involved. But before that contingency can be said to arise, the case may present a maritime aspect by reason of the precedent afforded by the cruisers of the Confederate States. To plunder and burn vessels on the high seas has passed into practice, and has therefore become law, since law at present is merely what we do. As these acts have been brought about by England herself, she has laid the ground for the plundering and burning of her own vessels by cruisers fitted out anywhere in the name of an enemy destitute of seaboard and ports.

We have first to form to ourselves some idea of what would constitute *success*. Here we must be guided by the indications afforded us of the opinions of the promoters themselves.

These promoters do not seem to be discoverable in England. After the cycle of events had been long completed, the Foreign Minister opposed a motion on the subject in the House, using at the time very strong language. He said "it would be *madness* " to throw a British army into an unknown country, in a tropical "climate, far from the sea, very far from its reserves and its "supplies." It is true that he appends to these words the following ones: "Without a full previous investigation as to "the means of moving, feeding them, and keeping them in "health."

The two portions of the sentence have no connexion with one another. This condition of things was known, and any further amount of information on the subject could not alter it. At a later time, Lord STANLEY himself says that he possessed every requisite information. A volume of such information has since been published, and it is all old, some of it very old. The particular information must have been obtained between the 26th of July and the 26th of August, when the war was formally announced from the Throne. Lord DERBY is more precise, and fixes to a day the period at which, *and not before*, the Government had received that information on which it acted.

The information which was required to divest the expedition of the character of madness, and to invest it with that of wisdom, must have consisted in showing that a British army would not be thrown into "an unknown country," that the country would have ceased to be "a tropical" one, that it would be brought near "to the sea," and that the army thrown into it should not be "very far from its reserves and supplies." We need not look for this information either in the revelations of ministers or in the pages of Blue-Books, because it could not be obtained; and nothing could be learned capable of falsifying Lord STANLEY's description, or of changing his conclusion that the undertaking would be one of madness.

*The Government received no information.* What does the information amount to according to their own showing? It was that India could furnish troops and Bombay transports! Mr. D'ISRAELI continues, after quoting this statement, "therefore "the position of the Government was materially changed in "three days." Lord STANLEY says that "no person speaking "with authority has expressed any doubt of the ultimate success "of the expedition," words which must, of course, refer to the grounds on which the Government had taken its new view of the case.

It was then upon *communications*, not information, from India that the war was determined upon. Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE

quotes his two telegrams about collecting cattle to show how "the mind of the Government was *forming itself*, as to the *necessity* of these measures"—forming itself on the food received from India, and therefore in reference to an Indian "necessity." If the motives were Indian, so must the success be Indian. These motives are entirely excluded from view in the Blue Books; they come out in Parliament.

We may conclude, then, the ostensible object to have been to strengthen our hold over India.

In this view the expedition must return after liberating the the prisoners. It would not be success either if the prisoners were put to death, or if the expedition were itself either destroyed or its remnants retained in captivity. In either case a new and a larger expedition would be required.

But success has also to be considered in point of time. Sir S. NORTHGOTE says :—

"Sir J. LAWRENCE represented to me that it was undesirable that *such a force* should be out of India for any long period; and that he was anxious *on all accounts to have the matter settled this season.*"

To supply the context is easy.

"A rapid and brilliant affair somewhere is required for our secure tenure of India. Let advantage be taken of the occasion of the prisoners in Abyssinia. But with our reduced military establishment, and in the agitated state of the public mind, this large drain on our resources cannot be long maintained, and the troops must be back again within the year."

But we are not left to conjecture. The Secretary for India does not, indeed, read words like the above from a Despatch of the Governor-General's, but he does say, "It is of the utmost importance that Sir J. LAWRENCE'S hands should be strengthened by unmistakable evidence that India has strength, and that the Government of England has force and determination to avenge insult and secure the liberties of her subjects."

It is then a rising in India that has to be looked to. An Indian Correspondent puts it thus: "We must go to kill Abyssinians in Africa to show that we are able to kill Russians in Asia."\*

Putting the logic aside, the connexion holds. Unless on the

\* The Aden correspondent of the *Times* says :—"At present *the native notion* is that the Emperors of Abyssinia and Russia have conspired together to attack the British Empire in India simultaneously from opposite sides—a notion, perhaps, partly traceable to the theory held by certain Russophobists that Theodore would not have dared to treat England as he had treated her if he had not secretly received encouragement from the Czar, who hopes, by providing England with troubles of her own in Abyssinia and India, to leave her little leisure or inclination for interfering with his future policy on 'the Eastern question.'"

supposition of actual danger, so desperate a course could not have been dreamt of, as that of sending an expedition against a country which never has been subdued, which never has been so much as invaded, and which only one man (CAMBYSES) in the whole history of the world had dreamt of invading, and has in consequence passed down to posterity under the designation of "MADMAN." But what is to become of *prestige*, if the expedition fails? Your expected insurrection will then not only take place in the midst of the ferment evoked by your disasters, but also in the absence of the troops requisite to compress it.

But these are not the only considerations. Had the expedition originated in England—that is, had it been undertaken with a view of liberating the prisoners—it was impossible that the charges in any part, should have been thrown on India. At least, it is impossible that the Indian authorities should have accepted the charge, without resistance, remonstrance, or even comment: the more so as there was the Act of Parliament to take their stand upon.

The case must be judged as at the time understood, not as it is accepted at present. During the four years of the pending affair, the idea of rescuing the prisoners by force had entered into no man's mind. All the communications of travellers published in the Blue-Books exclude the idea, either by not noticing it in their various schemes of liberation, or as expressly stating that it was not to be dreamt of. So also the Indian authorities. In the first Blue-Book of 1855 some scanty selections were given to enable the public to judge of the case. One of these is a memorandum from Brigadier-General COGLAN. After reviewing the different plans proposed, all of a peaceable nature, he goes on, in paragraph 27, to say:—

"Lastly, it remains to consider if any alternative process is open. *It is believed there is none.*"

And at paragraph 30 and last:—

"*The existing difficulty is one that CANNOT BE SURMOUNTED BY FORCE.*"

These conclusions are not dealt with by the Governor-General. No contradiction is given; no minute is called for; no inquiry takes place. *They were therefore admitted.* If, then, the case had been one of open dealing, the proposal to throw on India any pecuniary charge in reference to an undertaking so desperate and hopeless (as then believed) must have produced remonstrance from the Indian authorities.

We have another indication. CAMERON had been in captivity for more than three years, RASSAM for eighteen months, without any step having been taken towards an expedition. It was only on the 10th of July last that the Government began to send inquiring telegrams all about India. It is then clear that they

were acting on some new ground not connected with Abyssinia or the prisoners.

The very first condition that we find laid down by the Governor-General is that of time: "The war must be finished "within the season."

The season we must apply to Abyssinia, not India; and it is elsewhere so explained. "Season" is stated to mean the period elapsing before the rains—that is, the month of April. Your troops must go and return (to the coast, at least) before that month. This is explained by the country being untenable during the rains, and the more so as the roads have to be made, principally, if not exclusively, in the beds of streams through which vast masses of water, suddenly rising, rush with overwhelming force. These incidents are not absolutely confined to the rainy season, and may at any hour overwhelm our Expedition.\* Let us look at the practicability of this limit.

The Indian Blue-Book commences on the 10th of July, and concludes 31st October. It opens with this telegram:—

"How soon, if an Expedition to Abyssinia were determined on, could the force be ready to start?"

The answer is:—

"Four months may be assumed as the probable time."

On the 25th July, the Secretary of State for India telegraphs the following insane words:—

"Take the necessary steps at once to obtain information respecting an expedition to Abyssinia, in case we decide on one."

On the 27th:—

"What is the latest date at which operations in Abyssinia can be commenced, with the prospect of *finishing them this season?*"

The answer from the Governor of Bombay is:—

"The operations ought to commence by January, in order to be finished *in one season.*"

Four days later the war is announced. On the 31st the telegram is:—

"Prepare at once to collect transport animals."

Let us assume that the promise is kept, and that our forces are ready to commence operations in January. We have thus three months in which to achieve "success"—that is, to march to the point where the prisoners are, to liberate them, and to get back with them to the coast.

\* Here is an incident that occurred to Bruce in the passage which has been selected as preferable to all others for the march of our troops—i.e., the Hadas: "The river scarcely ran at our passing it, when all of a sudden we heard a noise on the mountains above, louder than the loudest thunder. Our guides, upon this, flew to the baggage, and removed it to the top of the green hill, which was no sooner done than we saw the river coming down the stream about the height of a man, and breadth of the whole bed it used to occupy." This was in *November*.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Expedition has laid down two and a half months for the time requisite "to reach Magdala, or wherever the Emperor THEODORUS may be."

Two months and a half to go, and as much to return. But this brings us into the rains, and leaves us two months in them. Either, then, Sir R. NAPIER is entirely mistaken in his estimate of time, or Sir J. LAWRENCE in his expectation of success. The wording of the passage is not consoling. Marching to a given spot is an operation that the human mind can take in—not so marching to a spot not given. The mind recoils from taking in a "wherever" as the end of a journey, especially when it is not of our own choosing. This march is to be "wherever" the King of ABYSSINIA chooses. The only historical precedent which we have to guide us, shows us an Abyssinian King against whom an expedition was made, walking away 900 miles. He, like our first parents, has the world before him. We have here some insight into the character of the Commander-in-Chief. We learn that he is daring, and make the discovery to tremble. A man that can, in a formal minute, say, as in this passage he virtually says, "I undertake to march to any given point in Central Africa—Timbuctoo not excluded—in two and a half months," is not a man to put in charge of an expedition, or rather he is just the man to put in charge of such an expedition as this.

When the proposition of an expedition comes ostensibly before the Governor-General in Council on the 17th of August, in consequence of the questions put by the telegram of July 17, no remonstrance is made in reference to the effects in India, such as spreading to every hamlet the knowledge that we have been insulted and our power braved by an insignificant African Prince, and that the whole of India is to be drained of troops in an endeavour to punish him after four years of impunity. No difficulty is raised as to sparing troops from India. No doubts are even suggested as to the difficulties or dangers of the operations: all that is said is in the way of encouragement. "We consider that there is *every prospect* of success, IF "the expedition be properly commanded." This is at once too much and too little, and falls in perfectly with the hypothesis that the expedition had been privately suggested from India. A further confirmation is afforded in paragraph 6, which is as follows:—

"6. *It is to be borne in mind* that the distance does not apparently exceed 300 miles, and that we invade the country *not to occupy it*, but for a special purpose; *which, being accomplished, we shall leave the country.*"

The expression, "it is to be borne in mind," does not belong to a servant executing orders he has received. It belongs to a man suggesting a course, and meeting objections to it. What is

to be thus borne in mind is the small distance (understated) to be traversed, the absence of all ulterior designs, the rapidity of execution—all which are to go to creating the “every prospect of success” on which the Government at home is expected to act. It is on this sentence that the war is made: it is this sentence which constitutes “the information” on which the Government act.

There is another despatch in a wholly different tone, dated September 3rd; but this despatch is “in continuation of our despatch of 17th of August,” and is therefore in continuation of the reply to telegram of 17th of July. It now speaks of “the difficulties *inseparable* from an expedition of such *magnitude*, and intended “to operate in a *distant, difficult, and comparatively -unknown* country.”

But the first half of this despatch, which announced “every prospect of success,” contained inclosures. These do not bear out the statement of the despatch. They consist of three minutes by Sir HENRY DURAND, and one by the Commander-in-Chief; the first of them is dated just one month before the first question is put from home, viz., the 10th of July. The other minutes are respectively of the dates of the 14th of June, the 15th of July, and the 18th of August; that is, one day later than the despatch in which it is enclosed. It is of the highest importance, or may become so, when the loss of India comes to be inquired into, to know that these documents were in the hands of the Governor-General when he dictated the words “every prospect of success.”

As these documents can be consulted in the Blue-Book, I need only say that they are occupied with the consideration of those difficulties and perils which are entirely shut out from view by the Governor-General. For instance, Sir H. DURAND repudiates the ground of confidence taken, of support from internal rebellion in Abyssinia. He doubts the facility of “getting out of the country when we may desire to wash our hands of the affair;” he contemplates the possibility of our having to retire in a manner which would take “the form of retreat in the face of “hostile masses.” He puts aside all idea of ending the matter in a “season,” and contemplates, under the most favourable circumstances, a prolonged occupation. His minute of the 15th of June ends with these words:—

“To return amid seething anarchy would be to invite pursuit and attack, if only for the sake of plunder.”

The Commander-in-Chief adopts these views, and says, “We must be prepared for occupation of a prolonged character.” He even goes to a specific statement. He fixes a period for the occupation—that is, in the event of success—and that period is TWO YEARS. His words are—



“An expedition can hardly fail to entail an *occupation of two years' duration* in the country of THEODORUS, and perhaps ultimately commit us to an Abyssinian ‘Algeria,’ a project which Consul CAMERON has always had in his mind; *vide* one of his letters at the commencement of his captivity! *As King THEODORUS may not impossibly have learnt the contents of that letter*, he is not improbably impressed with the fear of such an ultimate result, if we should now make a demonstration of any kind.”

Such are the contents of the documents on which are assumed to be based the opinion of the Governor-in-General in Council, that the expedition is one which “offers every prospect of success”—a despatch signed by the very men who had entered those minutes. It is to be remarked that those minutes had been drawn up, as is expressed by the Commander-in-Chief, “to meet the wishes” of the Governor-General. They were, therefore drawn up with a view to justify an expedition that had already been decided on. If there were others favourable they would have been given; but there are none such. The only fragment that might be so construed consists in the historical inquiries of Sir H. DURAND, which are twofold: The Abyssinians had once upon a time invaded Arabia with fifty thousand men; he deduces from this that troops—that is to say, their own forces—could be marched through that country. The other consists in showing the practicability of an invasion of that country by referring to the Portuguese expedition—which was of less than four hundred men—sent to support, not attack, the then King, and which miserably failed!

The substance of the despatch of the 17th of August was, however, telegraphed home two days before, namely, on the 15th, in this form:—“We consider that there is every prospect of success if the expedition be well commanded, and provided with a good political staff, entirely subordinate to the General commanding.”\* This decided opinion, which was received before the announcement to Parliament, no doubt determined the Government to make that announcement. The Home Government understood this telegram to be founded on further and favourable information, obtained since the minutes of the previous June, already referred to, which all concurred in saying that there was an absolute want of reliable information; whereas nothing now appears to have been received; and the case stands exactly where it was when Lord STANLEY spoke of the “madness” of such an expedition.

We have here the Governor-General and the General-in-Chief in direct contradiction in respect to the point of success. Success, according to the first, consisted in conclud-

\* Papers of 1867, p. 80.

ing within the season. Success, according to the second, who was the military authority, was unattainable in less than two years.

But these two years requisite for "success" afford ample space for the equipment of an *Alabama*; and if one, why not a hundred?—why not a thousand? England's trade is large enough. Such a contingency arising before failure, and whilst we are still on the road to success, the chances of the latter must, to a certain extent, be imperilled, and those of the former increased. Besides, a large naval force would be requisite for the protection of our transports, and the keeping open even of the communications with India, at a moment when our naval resources would be strained to the utmost in a desperate attempt to cover with our guns the expanse of ocean from the Arctic to the Antarctic circles wherever a British keel furrows its breast.

But I am dealing only with the alternative of Failure. On the Government hypothesis, Failure is to be followed by insurrection in India. This takes time. The events as they occur fan the flame of disaffection at home and national antipathy abroad. The rapid development of these germs must strike, if they do not instruct, even the most frivolous. We may leap over the process of causation, and assume that a disaster in Abyssinia will bring forth an invasion in Canada. Supposing it to be defeated, there will arise out of it trials and executions, involving questions of nationality and allegiance with the United States, whose privateers will be at the time sailing under Abyssinian colours, whilst these very cruisers will be furnishing cases for the criminal and admiralty courts. Meanwhile, a frenzy of popular passions will have been evoked on both sides.

While, then, failure entails the loss of prestige, and also of a large number of lives and a great sum of money, our tenure of India is shaken by the recoil, involving the necessity of sending out every available soldier; whilst our commerce is exposed to deprecation all over the world. The moment will then have come for the War with the United States.

War with the United States on such conditions as our last war was waged, could only terminate as that war did. We should not invade her territory; she would not, or would only at her peril and cost, invade ours. The matter would be settled afloat with every advantage on our side. The case is different now. As to the land, we have no longer devoted colonists to be their own garrison. A long series of infatuations, ending in the Union Bill, have alienated the hearts of the people of the North. The United States have gone through a war which has furnished them with soldiers and material, and inspired them with enterprise amounting to recklessness. To this has to be added the peculiar and bitter exasperation of so many of Her Majesty's

subjects settled beyond the Atlantic. Instead, therefore, of a resolute and successful resistance, as in 1810-12, we have to anticipate dismemberment in North America, and that possibly without so much as a struggle.

But the great change is at sea. We have bound ourselves, not to the United States, where war would set us free, but to other Powers, and notably Russia, and it was the condition of suffering our troops to withdraw from the Crimea, not to employ privateers, and not to seize the enemy's produce and property on board of neutral merchantmen. We can only, then, employ the regular navy, and it can be used only in blockading coasts, in capturing the enemy's trading vessels, in attacking such men-of-war as may expose themselves, for which, indeed, they would have no occasion. In reality, there would be nothing for us to attempt beyond blockade, as American trade would be shipped in neutral bottoms, whilst the United States merchantmen would be converted into privateers. On the other hand, our enemy, having surrendered no rights and no natural means of attack or defence, nor bound herself to any other Power, covers the seas with her cruisers, stops not only British vessels, but all other vessels carrying British property and produce.

When the Right of Search was surrendered, but little was said in dissent, and no motion was put to the House in the sense of refusing to submit; but the discussion which has ensued has done enough to implant a deep sense of fear, to which the circumstance of a war would give an explosive force. The mere announcement of a war with a country that had not made such surrender would bring an internal convulsion. The public securities would be affected and compromised, the stoppage of the Bank would follow, the fictitious currency system would break down, paper would be unexchangeable, and bankruptcy, public and private, overspread the land. The mere declaration of war under such circumstances would break England down—war which in former times gave her means, wealth, and power.

But let us suppose the reverse—viz. that public credit stood, and that internal difficulties vanished. How would the case of operations stand?

The American trade in American bottoms is still at your mercy. But their merchantmen are, in great part, capable of being converted into cruisers, whether to be called privateers or to be called men-of-war. That conversion will take place—both to secure their property and to prey upon yours. Your merchantmen can undergo no such transformation; for, whilst the mere rumour of war, as already given in evidence before a Committee of the House, would prevent the taking up of a "single ton of British shipping in any port of the world," these vessels could not be converted into privateers, both because you

have bound yourselves not to employ any, and because you are bound not to take your enemy's goods out of neutrals. Thus, the shipping of England falls at a blow, and then, indeed, in the words of the present Premier, will the people of England "wring their hands."

If the announcement of war did not bring bankruptcy, the operations of war must do so within six months. The enemy, meantime, sacrifices nothing. He makes capital out of the war. The ocean becomes his hunting-field, your enormous trade his treasury and bank. England must at once submit to whatever terms the United States may dictate, just as formerly Russia had to submit to whatever terms England chose to dictate. If this were not so, those former statesmen of England would have been insane who declared the Right of Search to be the foundation of British Power.

Failure, then, in Abyssinia entails the fall of Great Britain, or its equivalent. Its life would only be preserved as that of a gladiator, kept and fed for the slaughter of others at the order and for the gratification of a master.

King THEODORE may thus easily effect that which the power and genius combined of NAPOLEON destroyed itself in attempting. But it will be in consequence of our own acts.

I recommend to the careful perusal of the reader the following words of an eminent American diplomatist :—

"You have done us great harm, as well as yourselves. You have given so much encouragement to the worst part of our population that we can hardly control them. I speak of those who do not want our claims settled, but who prefer that the precedent you have set should stand, in order that they may imitate it. This is the basis of Fenianism — to get possession of some port, or any holding, however small ; then to get 'belligerent rights' from the United States ; and then to equip cruisers in our ports to prey upon your commerce, exactly as you did to us. And, setting aside 'Fenianism,' the same party is watching for your being involved in any hostilities of any sort to do the same thing, be it a war with some insignificant Power or a rebellion in a colony. I hope that we may be able to come to an agreement, in spite of this difficulty ; but the difficulty exists, and you would never have more cause to be alarmed than if we were to cease to urge upon you the settlement of our claims."

These words were spoken in March last. The same views were laid before the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. The English Government could not have disregarded the matter before involving themselves in "any hostilities ;" for less hostilities of so vast, uncertain, and alarming a character as those directed to a hunt after prisoners in Central Africa.\* That Government did

\* Sir S. Northcote said, November 28, 1867 :—" I had, besides, the deep feeling of responsibility to the People of India, being bound to see that their courage and their blood were not employed in an expedition which held out no prospect of success, and in which, in any event, they must undergo great sufferings, and in which possibly the

accede to the first American demand, and did agree to refer the matter to arbitration. It was too late. *The United States declined the proposal.* In the mean time, the Irish disaffection had assumed a new and wholly unexpected character. Trials had been made and had proved successful. The Fenians could turn out in masses. They could abstain from pillage. The people could trust them. The people could conceal them. The chiefs could escape. Men could be found to devote themselves for desperate enterprises. Money could be found. Organised movements and alarms could be managed in England herself. Atrocious street outrages and murders could be perpetrated. Gunpowder could be laid against public institutions and private dwellings; in sewers and underground railways; and there remained telegraphic wires, rails, gas-pipes, and reservoirs, and other paraphernalia of "civilisation" to be operated on. A fierce exasperation could be excited in the English people against the Irish, and so Fenianism inaugurated as a "nationality." Therefore the settlement of the claims for the depredations of the *Alabama* ceased to be an object for the United States, and it became their object to prevent a settlement.

The American journals which have recently arrived in this country demand that "*the case of the Alabama be admitted as a precedent.*" The President's Message says: "I have felt it my duty to decline the proposal of arbitration made by her Majesty's Government." Thus, on both sides, the case is reversed from where it was left by Lord CLARENDON, who denied the demand, and insolently "closed" the correspondence.

But the President's Message goes on to propose an Act of Congress to do no less than to relieve the subjects of the QUEEN of their allegiance, by conferring at its pleasure American citizenship on them, so that they shall carry back that cloak into the fields and bogs of Ireland and the judicatories of the three kingdoms. The conditions for doing so will be also, of course, at its pleasure, and if allegiance can be set aside in regard to British subjects touching American soil, it may be so also without that "formality." The inhabitants of Ulster or Connaught may, *en masse*, be gratified with the boon. In this there is nothing new or strange. It is but the legitimate and necessary application and complement of the principle we have seen applied to Savoy, Nice, Venice, and indeed to Italy and Germany; and which, applauding there, we have anticipated in the Ionian Islands, enforced in Wallachia and Moldavia, and endeavoured to apply to Candia.

This proposition of the President goes far beyond the fitting

very best interests of our Indian Empire might be jeopardised. I can assure the Committee that I felt it no slight responsibility which rested on me, and that from the moment I undertook this task I have never known what it was to be free from anxiety."

out of cruisers under the yet unknown Abyssinian Flag. There can be no question that a determining motive for it has been the news of the Abyssinian War.

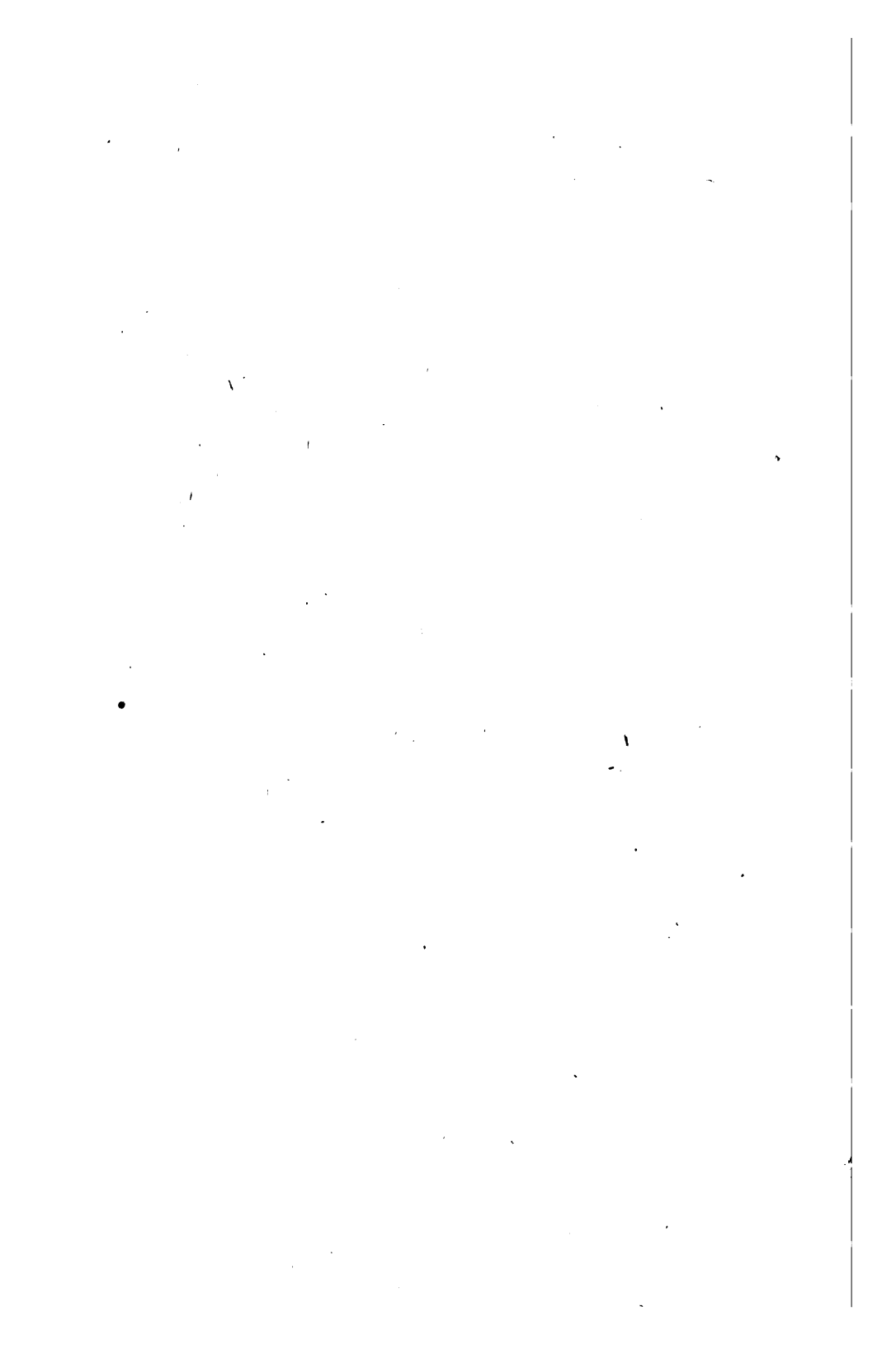
Such is the fearful aspect of affairs, the result not of hostile combination, or brought upon us by adverse fortune, but of our own guilty and imbecile acts; prepared for explosion on the contingency of a failure in Abyssinia, or even without a failure, by the mere fact of our being there engaged; and of which the most alarming feature is the incapacity and insanity which it reveals in those who have the management of our affairs.

They can have the courage to enter Abyssinia, and they have not the courage to resume the Right of Search. Oh! they will not do it in "cold blood;" they will do it when the occasion of a war arises; but this is no war, it is only an "Expedition!"

It is against this evil day that I have incessantly warned, that I have laid the ground on which, if ever, to make a last stand. Month by month, and year by year, have I accumulated the materials. Even from before the fatal act of Paris, I commenced the task by anticipating the treacherous design, and, after it had been perpetrated, unweaving, day by day, the threads and web of fallacy by which it was sought to blind the eyes, and ensnare the feet of this stupid people. Now, at the last moment of the eleventh hour, I cry to them, "If you will not draw back from vile murder, if you will not recall the assassins you are sending forth, at least pay for the *Alabama* and reverse the Declaration of Paris."

The sight of a ship's crew, utterly insane, unmooring, spreading canvas and putting to sea, is pitiable enough, but how frightful does it become when we ourselves and our children are forcibly embarked on-board.









HARVARD LAW LIBRARY

---

FROM THE LIBRARY

OF

RAMON DE DALMAN Y DE OLIVART  
MARQUÉS DE OLIVART

---

RECEIVED DECEMBER 31, 1911